Yet it is easy to see how, in consequence of this unwillingness to look at the sin, it may readily escape detection. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." These two characteristics have a very close connexion. On the one hand, the heart is so deceitful just because it is so desperately wicked. It shews its wickedness by its deceitfulness. It is because of its darkness that it is so fitted for concealment and seduction. On the other hand, the deceitfulness of the heart tends to hide its wickedness from the view. Unless we are on our guard against its power to deceive us, we shall never become acquainted with its desperate wickedness.

But there is something more than a mere *negative* ignorance produced by a deceitful heart. Mankind come to clothe themselves in a *positive* way with qualities which they do not possess.

When man would look to *his past* life, the heart interposes, and exhibits everything through a false and flattering medium. Distance in space, we know, gives a particular hue to the objects seen;—thus, we read of the Blue Mountains, though no mountains are in reality of a blue colour. Distance in time may have a somewhat similar colouring effect on the objects looked at. By the natural process of association under the influence of desire, the mind recalls most readily those parts of our past life which may seem creditable to our talents and virtues, and consigns all else to oblivion. We meditate with delight on our generosity, real or imaginary, our patience under suffering, our courage in the hour of danger. We remember how we outstript others in the path of duty, how we advanced when they shrank, and stood when they fell. We fondly dwell on the success which has attended our schemes, on the compliments which have been paid us, on the honours heaped on us; and when we think of our want of success, it is to attribute the whole to the folly of friends, or the malice of enemies. In the meantime, a

thousand evil actions and evil feelings are willingly forgotten. We never forget that we gave a certain sum in charity, but we forget that it was only the tenth or the hundredth part of what we expended on folly. The memory, like a skilful flatterer, thus brings before us those deeds which we delight to hear of, and leaves all others unnoticed; or should these others at times force themselves upon the attention, the heart has a variety of excuses to urge. The act was committed in our younger years, and it is suggested that it was